

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0104

October 4, 2002


The Honorable George W. Bush  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush

We are writing to express our concern regarding the economic implications of the West Coast Port labor dispute. It is our understanding that the negotiations with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) have reached an impasse that has resulted in a total shutdown of the ports. While the labor dispute may be taking place on the West Coast docks, the impact is being felt throughout the country, including Alabama and Kansas. Each day of shutdown damages the U.S. economy. Clearly, we must do all we can to prevent this disagreement from threatening our economy at such a critical juncture.

The agricultural and automobile industries are particularly threatened by this dispute as they rely heavily on imports and exports from the West Coast. We have been contacted by many of our constituents that describe the impact to agriculture as "devastating". The fact that ships are not being loaded or unloaded along the West Coast means that at the peak of the shipping season, we are unable to deliver U.S. agricultural products to foreign markets. This not only threatens our national economy, but imposes immediate, as well as long-term injury to U.S. agriculture. This dispute with ILWU presents innumerable setbacks to the transportation, mining, retail, and financial sectors of the economy that rely heavily on imports. The automobile industry has already been forced to lay-off workers and there will reportedly be extensive plant shut-downs in the coming weeks as a result of the situation.

We appreciate the steps that your administration has taken thus far to resolve this dispute and offer our support for any action on your part to assist the parties in the resolution of this matter. Please feel free to contact us if we may offer any assistance.

  
Jeff Sessions  
United States Senator

  
Richard Shelby  
United States Senator

  
Sam Brownback  
United States Senator